

# Safety Director's Bulletin

(One in a series of safety information bulletins from your Joint Insurance Fund)

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## School Crossing Guards

**"It was raining really hard and visibility wasn't great, and I saw her step off the curb and I slammed on the brakes... I couldn't stop, and it went right over her."**

*News article quoting an SUV driver who struck and killed a NJ crossing guard*

From 1993 to 2008, 14 NJ adult crossing guards were killed, and 121 suffered serious injuries, when struck by motor vehicles while at work. The most frequent cause of lost-day injuries were slip-trip-fall incidents. As the new school year approaches, now is the time to prepare guards, guard posts, and the community.

### TRAFFIC STOPPING TECHNIQUES

The primary function of a crossing guard is to assist children in crossing the street at assigned times and location. Crossing guards must become familiar with the proper methods for stopping traffic. Towns can assist by incorporating the advance warning guidelines presented in Chapter 7 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 2009 ed. It is available at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>.

The acceptable technique for guards to use in stopping traffic is the "gap" method, which requires waiting for an adequate spacing [gap] between a line of cars. This method is safer in that it allows the guard more time to enter the roadway and initiate a stop of traffic. The practice of stepping off the sidewalk and abruptly stopping traffic should be avoided at all times, since stopping traffic suddenly may cause rear end collisions and there is danger as a vehicle may not be able to stop short and could strike the guard.

When standing in position the guard should attempt to make eye contact with the approaching driver. This eye contact is important in that it re-enforces the guard's intention to the driver and helps provide an indication to the guard that the driver is aware of the guard's intentions. A driver not paying attention to the surroundings will usually not make this eye contact, thus alerting the guard that the driver may not be prepared to stop.

#### DO:

- ❖ Proceed cautiously into the crosswalk as you alert motorists to stop
- ❖ Be alert. Don't assume a vehicle will stop just because you're holding a STOP sign
- ❖ Give vehicles more time to stop during wet and icy conditions
- ❖ Watch out for passing or turning vehicles
- ❖ Be aware that larger vehicles require longer distances to stop safely
- ❖ Hold up your STOP sign until you and the children have cleared the crosswalk
- ❖ Use hand signals for motorists and verbal signals for children

#### DON'T:

- ❖ Direct traffic (Unless specifically trained to do so)
- ❖ Override a traffic signal

*It is suggested that Safety Director's Bulletins are posted on your safety announcement boards. This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented to you by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding the content of this bulletin, please contact J.A. Montgomery Risk Control at 877.398.3046.*

## EQUIPMENT



New requirements in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Sect. 7 now require guards to wear ANSI 107-2004 (or later) Class 2 or 3 high visibility apparel. They must also use a retroreflective STOP paddle. Towns are also encouraged to consider high visibility gloves, whistles, and even ice shoes.



## PROGRAM REVIEW

Policies and programs must be reviewed. The Safety Director recommends an annual review of the town's Crossing Guard policies, procedures, and equipment. Each year provides experiences and lessons learned that must be incorporated. The beginning of the school year is an excellent time to ensure those lessons are reflected in the written program.

Municipalities are encouraged to develop written job descriptions which include minimum physical requirements to perform the core functions of the job. Consider:

- *The MEL guidelines for visual and hearing acuity. Available at [www.njmel.org](http://www.njmel.org).*
- *Be able to raise a STOP paddle to shoulder height and hold for X amount of time*
- *Be able to stand, unassisted, for 1 hour (the typical duration of time on post)*
- *Be able to walk, unassisted, across street X number of times.*
- *Be able to raise both feet to step over curb*

Towns are also encouraged to take a proactive approach in identifying and addressing conditions that could pose a risk to the guards, children, and motorists. As the school year progresses, guards and their posts should be periodically monitored.

Adult school crossing guards' appointment, term, qualifications, and supervision requirements are given in N.J.S.A. 40A:9-154, available at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/surv/documents/njac40a9.pdf>. Appointments are for one year and the statute requires that guards be:

- *A citizen of New Jersey, of sound body and in good health*
- *Of good moral character and has not been convicted of any criminal offense involving moral turpitude*

Every adult school crossing guard shall be under the supervision and direction of the Chief of Police or the chief law enforcement officer of the municipality wherein he is appointed and shall perform his duties only in such municipality. Every adult school crossing guard shall be trained for the proper performance of his duties and responsibilities. Such training shall consist of:

- ✓ Minimum of two hours of classroom instruction (annual) which shall include information on methods of traffic control along with the duties and responsibilities of adult school crossing guards.
- ✓ Minimum of 20 hours of training under the direction of an experienced crossing guard or police officer.

The Safety Director's office has developed three checklists to assist towns in their evaluations.

- **Pre-School Year Program Review** - suggested to be used during the summer to inspect and prepare your program and guard posts for the coming school year.
- **Job Site Observation for Crossing Guards** - each guard should be observed at least once during their term. Newer guards or complex posts should be observed several times.
- **Sample Training Lesson Plan** - to assist with documenting your training program.

*Please contact your servicing consultant for these forms and for additional information.*